The Q A S Traveler 23-4 Story

Q A S Traveler 23-4

Reg.# 9250717
Birth Date: 02/01/1978
Sire: Band 234 of Ideal 3163
Dam: Q A S Blackbird Eve 601 1
Breeder: Quentin Stevick,
Des Lacs ND USA
Pincher Creek AB Canada

Notable Sons:
DHD Traveler 6807 (botton left)
Traveler 1148 GDAR (bottom middle)
R R Traveler 5204 (bottom right)
Traveler 124 GDAR
GDAR Traveler 584 LT
GAR Traveler 1489
SS Traveler 6T6

By: Quentin Stevick

People who have met my father, Vern Stevick, have been regaled with the story of how he sold "Traveler's" mother to me for $10.00 US.. This is true. But as Paul Harvey would say, "This is the rest of the story".
My first two years in 4-H I would have two steers: one to show, and one for a companion. By my third year, my parents thought that I was capable of handling a heifer project; so they agreed to let me take one of their replacement heifers, feed, fit, and show her; and then she would be returned to the breeding herd. At that time, the 4-H program only allowed showing yearling heifers- not as pairs later on. This program went on for several years.

My parents were very poor when they married, as were their parents before them, and all the ancestors before them. But my parents, Vern & Donna Stevick, had a dream--- and that dream was to have their own farm. To achieve that dream, my father worked full time off the farm, virtually the whole time that I was growing up. My mother stayed home

and ran the place and looked after my sister and I. We were all expected to pitch in, and farm work came first, then school, then school activities.

The actual price paid for "Zelda", was $10.00 + a year's labor on the farm. "Zelda" was the nickname for "QAS Blackbird Eve 601-1", dam of "QAS Traveler 23-4". Very few people know her by "Zelda", but this 4-H heifer was named after a famous author's wife, Mrs. F. Scott Fitzgerald, in a book that my mother was reading at the time. (The Great Gatsby)

In 1971, my father thought we should try Artificial Insemination on our cows. The idea stemmed from a friend of the family, Jake Niessen of Pearson, Man. Jake had been in the Angus business for years, and was now involved with importing a new breed of cattle from Europe: Simmental from Switzerland. My dad purchased six doses of semen from Jake's new bull, "Renz", and then we had to figure out a way to A.I. the cows. Ward County had a brand new assistant county agent, fresh from university, and he agreed to A.I. for us. From the six doses of semen we got three heifer calves and one steer. I showed the steer the next year in 4-H and Jake helped us sell the heifers for $1000 each as yearlings, This was the most money we had ever seen from a cattle sale! That fall of 1972, Dad said I should go to A.I. school, so I skipped three days of high school and paid my fees to go to A.I. school. This was a typical A.I. crash course: a few hours of semen handling, half a day of passing pipettes through rotting reproductive tracts from the slaughter plant, two partial days of breeding sloppy old canner milk cows, and a few hours on nutrition, and quite a bit of time listening to how good the semen was from the sponsor of the course! Those were the good old days of A.I.ing: thawing ampules of semen in ice water, drawing the semen up the pipette, and then trying to pass that large pipette through a small cervix.

Our A.I. facilities consisted of herding the cow into my grandparents' old hip roof dairy barn, and catching her head in a milk cow stanchion from an open alley. The cows had to be gentle and/or patient. The year that "Traveler" was conceived (1977); Dad was good friends with Glenn Hetzel from South Dakota, and he had just purchased "Band 105" from Jorgenson's Angus at Ideal, S.D. Dad bought some semen on this bull, but it was slow coming on the bus. "Zelda" was ready to be bred, so I drove into Minot and waited for the bus. I got home about midnight, managed to get the cow into the stanchion and bred her in the middle of the night. On February 1, 1978 "Traveler" was born.

That same year, 1978, I was clipping cattle with my partner, Eric Aasmundstad from Devil's Lake, N.D. We were doing sale cattle in Montana, so while we were in Lewistown, I tracked down the place that had raised the good Shorthorn steer that I had seen in Billings, MT, in 1970, eight years previously. The original lady had died, but her daughter, Pawnee Muscleman, was running the ranch. Eric and I drove out there and made a deal to purchase three steers for my sister Coreen to show in 4-H. Eric and I continued to work cattle shows and sales, and that July we went to Calgary, Alberta, during Calgary Stampede to fit cattle for Shawest Simmentals at the 2nd World Simmental Congress. We were working illegally in Canada (no work permits). We entered Canada at Coutts, Alberta, in July 1978; the first time that I had ever set foot in Alberta. I started dating this cowgirl, Anne Alm, at the Stampede; although we had met the previous November at Agribition Show in Regina, Sask. We were introduced by a mutual friend, Don Jensen, of Simmental Breeders Ltd., Cardston, AB.

By the summer of 1978, I felt that "Traveler" had quite a bit of potential, and I needed to get him somewhere to be seen. Many years before a long-time family friend had had a bad experience at a bull test center in Southern Montana; but I felt that "Traveler" needed to be on test. Both Dad and Clyde Barks had spoken highly of the people who ran Treasure State Test Center at Simms, MT. Russ and Barb Pepper had just purchased the test center. I planned to take "Traveler" there, but had no way to get him there.

Enter the rodeo girlfriend with the horse trailer! But she wouldn't bring her horse trailer all the way from Claresholm, Alberta to Lewistown, MT. She did bring her truck, though, and we drove out to the Mrs. Muscleman's, picked out the three steers, borrowed her trailer, rewired the trailer to fit Anne's truck, drove to North Dakota, unloaded the steers, picked up "Traveler", drove to Treasure State Test, unloaded "Traveler" from this pink, two-horse trailer, took the trailer back to Mrs. Muscleman, and proceeded back to Alberta to work more cattle shows. Russ Pepper still laughs about "those two kids with a borrowed pink horse trailer, dropping off the very first bull for the current test season". "Traveler's" test station number was # 101. At this point the bull still didn't have a name; only his number S68!

My mother and father named the bull for me. Dad says he suggested "Traveler" because I was traveling up and down the road clipping cattle. Mother says she suggested "Traveler" because that was the name of Robert E. Lee's gray horse he rode during the Civil War.

The next time I saw "Traveler" was during Christmas of 1978. I had stayed for Christmas with Anne's family, we

had gotten engaged in August, and I was taking a bus from Claresholm, AB to Billings, MT, to get cattle ready for the Denver Show for Jim Leachman. I contacted Russ Pepper and he met me at the bus depot and drove me out to see "Traveler". That was the only time I doubted "Traveler". After seeing him then, I said to Russ; "Well, I guess he won't be a $50,000 syndicate bull."

While Anne & I were in Denver with Leachman Cattle Co., we had two job offers for full time employment. I figured that with our wedding set for August 11, 1979, I needed a full time job. I decided on the job with Highfield Stock Farms, at Okotoks, AB, because it was going to allow me to do what I wanted-- work full time with show and sale cattle and to show cattle all over Canada and the U.S.

It took until the end of February, 1979, to get my Canadian work permit, and then it was only good for 90 days. At the end of the 90 days, Anne & I went to the Canadian consulate in Calgary to renew my work visa; and the gentleman who interviewed me wrote right on my landed immigrant application that I "HAD" to get married within 90 days (Aug 11)!! The Canadian government forced me to get married!

During all this time; my parents were fielding calls from people who had seen or heard about "Traveler". Mother had written to ABS (American Breeders Service) about him. I still have the letter of rejection from ABS on why they were not interested in him. Years later ABS leased "Traveler" from the syndicate that purchased him (Sitz, Stevenson, Davis, & DeNowh); and he quickly became ABS' first million dollar beef bull in semen sales.

I knew that the bull was doing good on test but was not aware of how good, and how much interest there was in him. Dad suggested that we come to Great Falls for the sale. I asked for a couple of days off work and we flew down on a Saturday. After several inquiries about how he would be sold, I dropped my 1/3 retained ownership clause on the recommendation that it would complicate the sale. I did retain the rights to 50 doses of semen per year, and the fact that his name could not be changed. I wanted people to know who raised the bull.

"Traveler" was the first bull in the ring. He started at $5000, that was more than I had expected in total. At about $30,000, Anne grabbed my knee. In my mind I can still see the sale and the whole time that Pat Goggins was selling "Traveler"; it seemed to be in slow motion. The gavel fell at $60,000 U.S. to the syndicate of Rollin' Rock, Gardner & Denowh, Basin Angus, and Sitz Angus. We took the buyers, contending bidders, auctioneer, and ring staff out for a big steak dinner; then Anne & I got on the plane, flew to Calgary, and I was back working at my job by 7:00 a.m. the next morning.

The money I got from "Traveler", less taxes, was used the following year to make the down payment on our first ranch. My ultimate dream was to have our own place. "Traveler" made that possible! We have hanging on our kitchen wall a commissioned painting of our first place, with "Zelda" standing in the forefront. The 4-H heifer that made it happen!"

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Where is Quentin Stevick?

In 2004 Quentin and Anne dispersed their cowherd of Angus and Simmental cattle. In early 2011 Quentin was asked by Gary Smith of Alta Exports International if he would be interested in calving out 150 Angus heifers...in Russia!

Calving out heifers was a drastic understatement, as he accepted the request his responsibility was far more than calving heifers. He was located in the city of Uglich, between Moscow and St. Petersburg on the Volga River in the Yaroslavl Oblast (Oblast translates Province). In response to a mandate by the Russian government to increase domestic protein production, multiple imports of American and Canadian seedstock have made their way across the sea. Quentin's responsibility with Agri-firma Russia and Alta Exports International was the development a cattle production infrastructure and the education of those involved with beef production. He was there just under two months. He has continued on in involvement.

In October of 2011 full-filled the role of stockman aboard a Phillipino Cargo Ship outfitted for shipping livestock. Over a period of 23 days he and 11 Phillipinos handled the daily care of 100 Bred Angus Heifers, 120 Jersey Heifers, 400 Holstein Heifers, and 45 Berkshire pigs, while at sea from Canada to Russia. Every animal arrived safe and healthy.

He is currently in Russia again and reports he is loving Russia. He is currently making plans to return in 2013.

Visit http://www.altaexports.com for videos on Quentin's experiences in Russia